

News from the Wyoming Department of Health

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Health Officer Says It's Not Too Late for Flu Vaccines

Wyoming's state health officer is advising Wyoming residents that it is not too late to get vaccinated for protection from swine (novel H1N1) flu with ample supplies of the vaccine available.

"There is now plenty of H1N1 vaccine available across the state for anyone who wants it," said Dr. Brent Sherard, Wyoming Department of Health director and state health officer. "There are no longer any age or other restrictions linked to distribution."

Sherard noted the vaccine is widely available at retail pharmacies and other private healthcare sources. "These can be very convenient places to get vaccinated because they are often located in the stores we frequently visit anyway," he said.

"We simply don't know what the coming months will mean for H1N1 flu activity, so I'm recommending that people get vaccinated against the strain if they haven't already done so," Sherard said. "As always, vaccines are the single most effective weapon we have in our arsenal to fight influenza," Sherard said.

Sherard noted influenza vaccines take roughly 10 days to offer effective protection. "Getting protected before the flu is circulating around you is far smarter than waiting until your friends and coworkers are already ill."

Sherard said influenza vaccines have a proven safety record. "Novel H1N1 vaccine is essentially no different. No corners were cut in its development," he said.

The H1N1 vaccine began arriving in Wyoming in late October. More than 168,000 doses have been ordered for the state by the Wyoming Department of Health. County public health officials have coordinated much of the distribution. The federal government is paying for the H1N1 vaccine; some providers may charge a small administration fee.

Sherard said county public health nursing offices and private medical professionals are good sources for current, local information about vaccine distribution.

More information about swine (novel H1N1) flu and vaccination in Wyoming is also available online at www.health.wyo.gov.

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